

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 INT-01 COME-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1020

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 1712

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID US, JO

SUBJ: COPPER IN JORDAN

1. CROWN PRINCE HASSAN RAISED WITH ME THE OFFER MADE TO
NPC DIRECTOR KHALIL SALEM OF U.S. ASSISTANCE THROUGH
BATTELLE INSTITUTE IN DEVELOPING INITIAL SURVEYS FOR
JORDANIAN COPPER DEPOSITS.

2. HE INDICATED SOME CONCERN ABOUT DROPPING FRENCH FROM
THE PROJECT, NOTING THAT THEY HAD DONE SO SEVERAL TIMES
IN THE PAST ON SUCH THINGS AS AMMAN AIRPORT, ETC.

3. HE SUGGESTED THAT THERE COULD BE SOME COMBINATION
OF FRENCH INITIAL WORK WITH U.S. STEEL FOLLOW-UP. I
NOTED THAT FRENCH HAD A TENDENCY, ONCE THEY GOT INITIAL
PILOT PLAN STUDIES UNDER WAY, TO ORGANIZE PROJECTS
SO THAT THEY COULD ONLY LOGICALLY BE CARRIED OUT
BY A FRENCH FIRM. HASSAN SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT U.S. STEEL
HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH THE FRENCH ELSEWHERE
AND HAD TOLD JORDANIANS THAT THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED TO
DO SO AGAIN.

4. HE THEN SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS BATTELLE AND FRENCH
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GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (PRG) PREPARING THE PILOT PLAN
STUDIES COULD COOPERATE. WHILE I DID NOT EXCLUDE THE

POSSIBILITY, I URGED HIM TO LOOK FIRST AT WHAT BATTELLE HAD TO OFFER AND THEN PERHAPS CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES OF COOPERATION. HE SEEMED IMPRESSED BY THE ARGUMENT THAT BATTELLE HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC TO SELL AND THAT HE MIGHT DO WELL LEAVING OPEN THE QUESTION OF FOLLOW-ON BY U.S. STEEL OR ANYONE ELSE UNTIL HE COULD WORK OUT TO WHAT EXTENT THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN WISHED TO BE INVOLVED IN MINING AND SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS. HE EVEN AT ONE POINT SUGGESTED THAT BATTELLE MIGHT BE CALLED IN TO REVIEW WHATEVER STUDIES ARE PRODUCED BY THE INITIAL FRENCH SURVEY AND PILOT PLAN.

5. THE UPSHOT OF ALL THIS IS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE A CLEAR PROPOSAL BY BATTELLE IF WE ARE TO HAVE A CONTINUING U.S. INTEREST IN JORDANIAN COPPER. I AM NOT SURE TO WHAT EXTENT WASHINGTON BELIEVES WE SHOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE HERE, BUT I AM RELUCTANT TO SEE ANY POTENTIAL SOURCE OF SCARCE HARD MINERALS NOT FULLY LOOKED AT BY U.S. CONCERNS, PARTICULARLY WHEN OUR AID INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR JORDAN HAS BEEN SO CONSISTENTLY GENEROUS OVER THE YEARS. THE CROWN PRINCE AGREES THAT JORDAN SHOULD GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO ANY COMPETING U.S. OFFER TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER THE POSSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPING JORDANIAN COPPER. PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN WE CAN EXPECT BATTELLE PROPOSAL WHICH SHOULD COME BY CABLE.

PICKERING

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